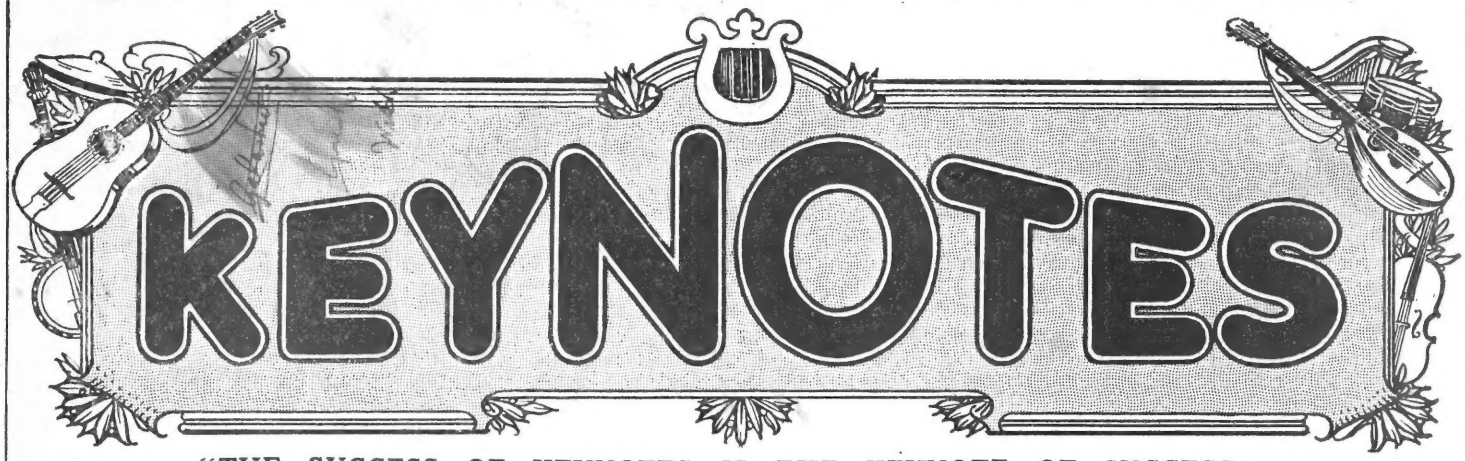

JOHN ALVEY TURNER'S MUSICAL MONTHLY

KEYNOTES

"THE SUCCESS OF KEYNOTES IS THE KEYNOTE OF SUCCESS."

139, Oxford Street, London, W. Edited by D. C. FAIRWEATHER. Telephone: Regent 3607.

Vol. I. No. 8. AUGUST, 1925. Price Sixpence.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
Editorial. A Bereavement		165
How to Play Cammeyer's "Caprice Accidental" (2)	By Bernard Sheaff	166
The Mandoline: Plectrum Playing	By Pasquale Troise	167
A Survey of the Guitar (1)	By Philip J. Bone	168
Keynotes Banjo Club		169
The Left Hand in Banjo Playing	By Edward Fairs	170
"The Banjo Club Outing"	By a Member	171
Around the Theatres	By D.M.	172
Answer to Mandolinists		172
Special Music		173–178
Keynotes Theatrical Gallery, No. 8.	Miss Heather Thatcher	179
Stage Illusions	By D.M.	179
The Banjo: Plectrum and Finger Playing	By Claude E. Day	180
The Hawaiian Steel Guitar	By A. F. Cramer	181
A Banjo in Every Home!	By "Musica"	181
The Nomad Banjo Bandelette		182
Dance Notes		182
Professional Cards		183
Advertisements		184–186

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Bereavement.

It is with great regret that we have to announce this month the absence of our Editor, David C. Fairweather, owing to the untimely and tragic death of his wife, who passed away on Monday, 6th July, 1925, aged 27.

We are sure readers of Keynotes will wish to extend to our Editor their heartfelt sympathy at his sudden bereavement.

A life has been given, but a life has been taken.

Editorial.

I TRUST it will not be irrelevant to say we have great pleasure in presenting this our seventh number to our readers. It is full of good things. First of all, on page 169 you will find all news about the "Keynotes Banjo Club." We commend this page to lovers of stringed instruments. Just think of the possibilities that may be turned into realities by the formation of such a club! The keynote will be comradeship. By playing a solo in front of people who you know play themselves you will gain greater confidence (if you do not elect to pay 2s. 6d. instead). Players of all ages and experience will meet together for an evening's pleasure and profit. Now turn to page 169 and give these proposals your serious consideration. Also on page 169 you will find a preliminary notice of our next Concert. The programme speaks for itself. We do not think we could give you a better one. You do? Well, send your suggestions along, *all* are welcome! We have the continued support of Sig. Pasquale Troise, Bernard Sheaff and Edward Fairs. Mr. A. F. Cramer's second article on the Steel Guitar is to be found on page 181. We commend to you the article on page 180 by a new contributor, Mr. Claude E. Day. Our usual Theatrical Notes by D.M., our Theatrical Gallery, Concert Reports, and an article by "Musica" can all be read with interest and we hope profit. We shall miss our usual brilliant humorous article by D. C. Fairweather. Who failed to have a hearty laugh over last month's article "A Wireless Lament"? We do sincerely trust his writings will not be impaired by his recent bereavement.

We are pleased to state that all half-yearly subscriptions have been renewed for the second half-year. This is the best compliment we could receive. We ask readers to pardon our shortcomings. Anything that is done, is done with an object in view. We like your complaints and criticisms. So far as lays in our power Keynotes will improve each month. We cannot be successful if you do not give your support.

We have found some good friends during our first six months' existence, and have received great encouragement from them.

Don't forget these two dates—Thursday, 24th September, and Saturday, 17th October!

How to Play Cammeyer's "Caprice Accidental."

By Bernard Sheaff.

Second Movement.

THIS is mainly a melody on the 1st string, which should, of course, predominate over the accompanying chords.

Bars 1, 2 and 3 are simple enough and need no comment. In bar 4 make 2 B. and 3rd finger on F sharp, 4th string, then in bar 5 the 3rd finger easily changes to F sharp, 1st string. The change to the 4 P.B. and 6 P.B. following should be made by sliding, not raising, the 1st finger barre. The 7th bar is played at 10 P., the 1st and 2nd fingers remaining on the accompanying chord until the whole formation (3–1–2) is slurred back one fret to 9 P., which is retained for this bar (8) and bar 9 following. The 1st and 2nd fingers remain on the accompanying chords also throughout these two bars, and the change of harmony—on the 3rd string—is effected by *sliding* the second finger from F sharp to E sharp.

The printed fingering from bar 9 to bar 16 makes everything very explicit—but follow the fingering exactly. Bars 17 to 28 are a repetition, so we skip to bar 29. Before playing this, the student should notice that the harmonies and formation in bars 29 and 30 are almost exactly the same, but in a different key, as those in bars 5 and 6 in the first movement. After taking note of the difference in time and accent, the progression of the left hand is in both instances almost identical. The composer uses the same progression (in F major) in the "Dancer's Dream" and in other solos in different guises, so it is worth some extra study to acquire a left hand movement which effects the perfect blend of tone.

Bar 31 is played at the 7 P.B. I think I should prefer to play 2nd string G sharp with the 3rd finger instead of the 2nd finger indicated, so that the 3rd finger is ready for the last chord in this bar (3–3–1).

Third Movement.

The treatment and construction of this melody is quite different from that of either of the preceding movements. It must first of all be observed that the first bar contains a "figure" and a way of playing this group of notes, that is utilized, at various positions and sometimes with slight changes, many times in the movement. Therefore, it is important that this idea of the composer's should be exactly interpreted and understood before the movement is attempted as a whole.

After the open 4th string (1st bar) we have B and G on 1st and 2nd strings, followed by F sharp and E on the 3rd string. The effect intended here—and with all the descending groupes of notes similarly arranged which occur—is obtained by holding down the 1st and 2nd strings until *after* the 3rd string note—in this case F sharp—is played. It will be noticed how often the open 4th string D has been placed at the commencement of the bar. This should be allowed to sing right through the bar to assist the legato, and it also greatly facilitates the smooth movement of the left hand, which is enabled to change position while the 4th string is being struck.

Returning to the 1st bar. The legato is still further enhanced in this bar by the 2nd finger sliding on the 3rd string from E back to B in bar 2. The 2nd finger then slips back one fret to A sharp, the 4th finger is placed on F sharp, and still holding A sharp the first finger drops behind the 4th on to E.

In bars 5 and 6 we have figures similar to that in bar 1. Here the 1st and 2nd strings must be held down *throughout* each bar.

In bars 7 and 8 the descending group is still in use, but in these bars, as the position is rather high, the composer has assigned the third note after the bass to the 2nd instead of the 3rd string, so to obtain the right accent the first B in bar 7, and the first A and first A sharp in bar 8 should be played with the thumb; the other 2nd string notes in the bars, of course, with the 1st finger. Hold the 1st string note in each bar down.

In bar 11 slide the 1st finger on E back to D sharp in bar 12, and the 3rd finger on C should then slide back to B. The 2nd finger stopping D sharp can slide back to A in bar 13. This bar introduces a series of arpeggios at different positions, the right hand fingering of which is quite simple as there are no consecutive notes on one string. Careful attention, however, must be paid to the left hand, particularly with regard to the manner of shifting from one position to another. There is no open bass string here to assist.

The fundamental left hand formation for the three P.B.s—1st, 4th and 10th—is the 1–1–2 chord. This formation should be held down to the extent of the dotted lines in the score, the 4th finger reaching out to alter the 1st string note as required. The formation being the same, the fingers should *slide* between these positions.

It is important that this arpeggio passage should be studiously practised until there is no break in the rhythm or flaw in the quality of the notes when the left hand shifts. A *rall.* can commence at the end of bar 15, terminating with a pause on A sharp in bar 16. This note is struck with the thumb.

The remainder of the movement up to bar 30 is made quite clear by the printed fingering. There are several fresh phrases, but they are all built up of, and rendered in the same manner as, the figures already analysed.

Bars 31 and 32 completing the movement Mr. Cammeyer himself renders with a difference from the score, and as many players would probably like to adopt this alteration I have obtained the composer's permission to reproduce these altered bars here:

In bars 2 and 3 of the 1st movement, Mr. Cammeyer makes another alteration which I am also permitted to reveal, as under:

This effect depends on the correct timing of the slide on the third string so that the first finger reaches the 7 B. just as this chord is struck. This alteration applies, of course, to every repetition of these bars.

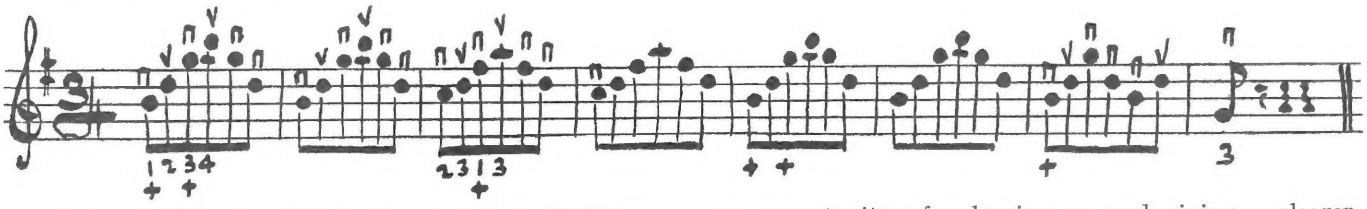
The Mandoline.

PLECTRUM PLAYING.

By Pasquale Troise.

I HAVE told you so far that it is desirable to maintain an unbroken sequence of down and up strokes. This, of course, where practicable, bearing in mind the fundamental to begin play on a new string *always* with a down stroke, that it is permissible to play two or more consecutive down strokes, but never two upstrokes, and when possible to make use of open strings or 4th finger as required where it is desired not to interrupt the sequence of down and up strokes. I will now give you an example of where two or more consecutive down strokes may be played with advantage :

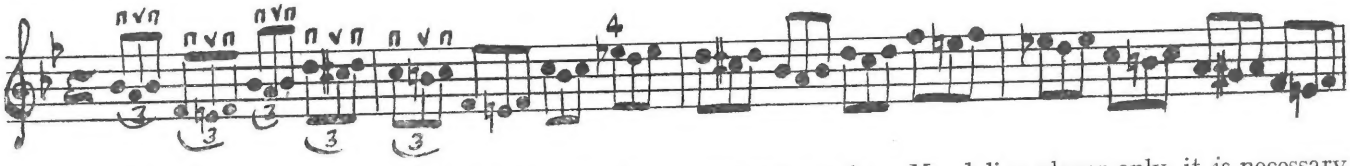
EXAMPLE No 1



As you will notice, this is an arpeggio in G Major. You begin B (downstroke), D (upstroke), G (downstroke), B (upstroke), G (downstroke), D (new string downstroke). 2nd bar : B *again* downstroke because it begins a new arpeggio, and in arpeggi the first note should always be the accent note or strongest, therefore you should always begin an arpeggio with a downstroke. Thus you have three consecutive downstrokes, which in this case cannot be played in any other way. See now the 7th bar. Here you have B (downstroke), D (upstroke), G (downstroke), D (downstroke) being a new string this is compulsory . . . B *again downstroke*. This, of course, is optional but preferable inasmuch as you next note D (upstroke) brings your plectrum hand *towards* the D string for G 3rd finger D string (new string) where downstroke is compulsory. Now try playing B (5th note, 7th bar) upstroke, D (downstroke), G (new string) downstroke ; compare the two methods and you will better understand what I mean. It is just this fractional advantage at the right moment which makes for improved technique, precision and rapidity. Exactly where and when to use this plectrum play with advantage, experience and practice will suggest to you.

The cross under the notes shown in example indicates that after playing this note (as in the case 1st bar, B 1st finger, keep this finger *down* and play the next note D (3rd finger)). This marks the position giving greater precision, steadiness and rapidity in playing :—

EXAMPLE No 2. TRIPLETS:



I am giving here an example of triplets as *generally* they should be played. In triplets the first note is always the strongest or accent note, and generally should be a down stroke, therefore you have nvn nvn. Of course, this rule does not always apply. It is desirable in some cases to maintain the down and upstroke sequence or consecutive downstrokes. Pressure of space does not permit me to give these examples in this number, but possibly later I may have further to say in these assuredly very instructive examples of plectrum play.

I am happy in having to reply to two very interesting queries in this number. It is these queries that give me an opportunity of enlarging on and giving a clearer definition of any particular point or problem which may suggest itself to my readers and which, of course, are of general interest to all Mandoline players. Send along your queries and let them be brief, concise and to the point.

In playing triplets, the first note of each triplet is the accent note or strong note, and should be played with a downstroke as per above example.

At this stage a few general hints enumerated below will be found interesting and helpful to Mandolinists in general, especially so to beginners.

Be sure to learn your Theory of Music in strict conjunction with the purely mechanical part of Mandoline playing. I mean by this that there are mandolinists who become mere *mechanical* readers of music. That is to say they recognise a note by its position on the music lines or spaces and its corresponding position on the Mandoline. They cannot *name* that note, at least not at once. They will probably have to search back in their minds to their earlier lessons and laboriously work out the name of that note. This should not be so. As you play, learn to name the note mentally ; you will soon be able to name any note at sight. You may say that this is not essential so long as you can correctly play the note ? Exactly so, but this is what I mean by saying *understand* what you are playing. It is *not* sufficient to be a Mandoline player only, it *is* necessary to be also a musician.

(*To be continued*).

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A Survey of the Guitar.

(1). Early History.

By Philip J. Bone.

THE OLD GUITAR.

Neglected now is the old guitar,
  And mouldering into decay ;
Fretted with many a rift and scar
  That the dull dust hides away,
While the spider spins a silver star
  In its silent lips to-day.

The key holds only nerveless strings—
  The sinews of brave old airs
Are pulseless now ; and the scarf that clings
  So closely here, declares
A sad regret in its ravelings
  And the faded hue it wears.

But the old guitar, with a lenient grace
  Has cherished a smile for me ;
And its features hint of a fairer face
  That comes with the memory
Of a flower-and-perfume haunted place
  And a moonlit balcony.

Music sweeter than words confess,
  Or the minstrel's powers invent,
Thrilled here once at the light caress
  Of the fairy hands, that lent
This excuse for the kiss I press
  On the dear old instrument.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

THIS series of articles will treat of the Guitar in a varied and comprehensive manner. Commencing with the origin and early history of the instrument, its progress, exalted position among musical instruments, and now somewhat neglected and ignored condition, will be traced, and will be concluded with technical articles on the modern instrument as required at the present day. Chapters will be devoted to the particular characteristics, merits and demerits of the Guitar, and as a musical instrument, both in its capacity as a solo and also as an accompanying instrument for vocal and instrumental items ; also its usefulness in duos with another instrument, and its sphere in the modern mandoline or banjo orchestra. The principal features and necessary points of a good Guitar will be enumerated, its proper care, management and maintenance in perfect order, with various methods of stringing and tuning, particularly in Spain, Russia and other lands, in addition to interesting facts relative to the instrument generally.

The history of the Guitar reaches into the primitive times of music, which presents to us shapes and designs of instruments that are often but seemingly foreign to the Guitar of to-day, and, although an instrument of such ancient origin, it is yet imperfectly understood by musicians generally at the present day, especially in its capacity as a solo instrument. For all practical purposes it remains as a sealed book to the majority, and for this reason in particular, that it demands special and particular study, coupled with a vast musical experience, to elicit even a small degree of its wonderful resources and range of effects.

The Guitar was known to the Egyptians, in a shape somewhat similar to the instrument in present use, for more than fifteen centuries before the Christian era. These people and the Hindoos had a system of music which considerably antidates the Christian era, and the latter race not only treated music as a fine art but also mathematically and philosophically. Their principal instrument was the Vina, and on this many virtuosi obtained celebrity. The Vina was a species of Guitar with a fretted fingerboard nearly two feet in length, while the body of the instrument was made of two very large calabashes or gourds about fourteen inches in diameter, and provided with a circular soundhole in the bottom about five inches in diameter. The fingerboard, two inches in width, was divided by nineteen frets, which were pieces of gut tied round the neck of the instrument and adjusted in their proper position by the performer, and it was strung with seven strings of steel and brass. The Sitar, another Hindoo instrument, is fashioned like a European Guitar and has seventeen frets and seven strings, two of which are tuned in unison ; while the Rabab, shaped like the Spanish Guitar, has six fingerboard strings and seven sympathetic (non-fingered) vibrating strings, and is very popular in North West India, Persia and Afghanistan. The Burmese musicians are very skilful performers on a kind of Guitar, the sound box of which is a coacoanut shell with a bamboo handle and fingerboard, and from its two wire strings the snake charmers manage to extract tones of weirdness, which form an accompaniment to their chanting.

Josephus describes the Psaltery or ancient Guitar of the Hebrews as a species of Harp or Lyre of twelve strings, played with the fingers. The neck of this instrument projects from a circular bowl of red sandal wood, which has an aperature underneath. A skin is stretched over the top of the bowl, while a piece of red leather is drawn tightly over, the highest point being in the middle. Through this strip of leather two pieces of wood pass in such a direction that, with a third piece which is fastened above to the end of the two in an oblique direction, together form an inverted delta, while the strings of the instrument pass over the skin on a narrow bridge, and are attached to a crude peg above. This instrument was named Nebhel, which signifies a bottle or leather bag. No nations, however, with the exception of the Egyptian and Hindoo, have recorded their musical history so faithfully as the Chinese, who ascribe the invention of the art to spiritual beings, and there are many Chinese instruments somewhat similar to the Banjo and Guitar family which vary in the number of their strings.

The original stringed instruments of the Japanese are much more crude than those of the Chinese ; and strange though it may seem, at the present day, the Japanese are in the front rank among the Mandolinists and Guitarists of the world, their mandolin solos and mandolin bands perform with great skill the most exacting compositions for these instruments, and their players are also as discriminating in their choice of instruments, for many of the most valuable Guitars by European makers of renown are used by them. A few years ago, however, no wedding in Japan would be considered in proper style without at least one performer on the Sam-sin, a Guitar with a long neck and strung with three strings.

Among the Aborigines of Africa several rude instruments thought to be the precursor of the Banjo have been discovered, but the natives have no method or system, merely strumming without any melodic sense whatever.

(*To be continued*).

The Banjo Club Outing.

By A Member.

THE printers will, I trust, get the title right, because any little mistake like "Outing the Banjo Club" might produce scornful laughs of incredulity from Bath and Johannesburg.

In America, so a really well educated person once told me I think, they celebrate something frightfully important on the 4th July. It is Fred Van Epps' birthday or something of that sort I expect. Anyhow, it is what the old Flying Corps used to call "an occasion."

And this year so it was in Somerset.

The President of the T.B.B.C. (no, not The British Broadcasting Company—the Tarrant Bailey Banjo Club) hoping, no doubt, that all the fruit would be safely over by then, announced from the Chair at the May Meeting his desire to invite the whole crowd to his Langford house for the July Meeting. He is like that. Generous to a fault without thinking of the consequences. He undertook everything. He would arrange the transport, feed the multitude, and see that his household and immediate neighbours took no drastic measures whilst the members were fine-dodging—that is playing their respective solos.

He instructed the Secretary to charter a char-a-banc for 4th July.

So, apparently, did all the Presidents of all the other organisations in Great Britain; because long before our Secretary had really grasped the fact that he was to act, all the other Secretaries had, and there was no char-a-banc to be got for love or money or the Banjo Club.

But our Secretary is a resourceful old person, and by hiring, at the President's expense, one big car to carry seven persons, contrived in some low and deceitful manner to so overcome the better judgment of those members who were also car-owners, that the balance of the entire company were able to be present. It was pleasing to note that retribution followed immediately, as he was forced to drive his own car and consequently arrived last—so late, in fact, that by the time he *did* appear all the other members' faces and pockets were so bristling with cigars that they looked like a forest of pine trees.

Our host and hostess live in most suitable surroundings. They are charming and so is their home. A more beautiful garden it is impossible to imagine, and the trout look up at you from the brook that tumbles through it, with mournful eyes and drooping mouths, trying to make clear the regret they feel at having no fingers to put to their noses, because they are fully aware, like every other living thing in the neighbourhood, that no harm can come to them whilst the President is about.

Leaving the trout and roses, the party were conducted through many clusters of sweet peas (alas, even these could not compete with the cigars!) down avenues of fruit trees to an island marked "Strictly Private," and guarded by a drawbridge. It was not an uninhabited isle as a green and cool-looking tent proved: and two natives, as represented by our President's pretty granddaughters, so far relaxed the rules of the Island Government as to invite the Club to inspect it. As many as the Island would hold actually did so. The inhabitants were chocolate savages. Not in colour, but in their determined efforts to beguile innocent cigar consumers into adding the flavour of chocolate cream to that of the flagrant weed. Yes, I mean flagrant. They were fragrant too, if you like, but I should have preferred to smell the sweet peas.

From the island we went to view dwellings from the Ideal Homes Exhibition and the pigs. The Tarrant Bailey Banjo Club may have moved London and Johannesburg to copy, but it left those pigs stone cold. As pigs, they had nothing to learn from any of us evidently, and we cut no more ice than any other deep sea pearls would have done. *I* think we ought to have played to them. They must be musical, as I understand they are fed on sharps amongst other things. Whether our host noticed the apathy on the part of his pigs I am unable to say, but certain it is that at this point he suggested our returning to tea.

And what a tea! There is no doubt about it, our President does know how to do things. Tarrant Bailey, Jun., made, I believe, yet another "Record." Anyhow, he was the last to give up and must, I feel sure, have felt more like reproducing than recording.

Then, on behalf of the Club, our President, with a delightful and sincere little address, presented to Dr. Brian G. Thompson, M.D., a banjo hanger bearing the initials "B. G. T." in silver as a reminder of his happy times with the Club, since, alas, he is returning to New Zealand very shortly. The Doctor, almost overcome by astonishment, emotion and tea, responded briefly, concluding his remarks with a promise to start a Tarrant Bailey Banjo Club in New Zealand directly he landed. From what we know of the Doctor's enthusiasm, we think it not at all unlikely that he will start a Banjo Club on the boat going out.

And now commenced the banjorial activities of the Club's first open air Meeting. The piano had been brought down from a big music-room over the garage known locally as "Heaven" on account of its altitude, and one could not help thinking that so substantial a design of harp was calculated to cause the fall of the angelic hosts who were called upon to hoist it up and down that particular stairway to Paradise. However, nothing is too much trouble for our President and his merry helpers, so there the piano was.

The scene before the playing actually commenced would have made a delightful picture for Keynotes. Acres of Banjo Cases strewn across the lawn, whilst under every tree in sight were little bunches of Banjoists trying over the solo that was to make or mar their perfect bliss. And everyone's luck was in! The delightful spirit of peace and perfection that overhangs our President's dwelling had entered the souls of all the soloists, and many of them broke all previous records for tone production and absence of "fluffings." Then some duets were called for, and finally the Band Instruments produced for mighty concerted numbers, and just as we all thought it must be six o'clock it struck eight, and the difficulty of finding one's own Banjo case brought the first shadow to an otherwise perfect day. But it had to be, and half an hour later a row of very unpleasant motor cars were rattling their bonnets impatiently at the delay incurred by final drinks and votes of thanks. It was a great day. Long live our President and his charming wife!

AROUND THE THEATRES.

Criterion Theatre.

MIXED DOUBLES.

THIS play was originally produced in the provinces under the name of "*Jazz Marriage,*" but has since then been re-named as above. A suitable title too, for "mixed" it is, in more senses than one! It is a purely farcical comedy of the lightest description, but an amusing one nevertheless, and ensures one a hearty laugh, and surely after all that is a "consummation greatly to be desired" on a hot July evening. The plot is so involved, and the situation at times so complicated, that it takes a brave person to try and unravel the tangled skein. The action takes place in the Hall of Sir John Dorle's house at Compton Dorle, where Sir John himself (played by Mr. Aubrey Smith), a wealthy bachelor of ripe years, having met and married abroad a charming widow (as he thought) returns to spend his honeymoon, and there his troubles begin. It all happens through a leaking roof. Their nearest neighbours and tenants, Mr. and Mrs. Reggie Irvine, a recently married couple, are the unfortunate possessors of this house with the leaking roof, and the husband comes up to see Sir John about it, begging him to repair same, as apparently the roof is no respector of persons, but leaks alike both on his manuscript (he is a novelist) and his wife's culinary efforts, which latter according to him are never of the best anyway, the result being their domestic bliss is in a very involved state. Having stated his grievance he meets Sir John's wife, and discovers that she is (or was) his former wife from whom he was divorced some time ago, and in the course of conversation with her, also discovers the somewhat important fact that, owing to some slight negligence on her part, the decree was never made absolute, therefore she is still his wife legally, and his present wife is no longer his wife. They both agree to keep this fact dark and "carry on," but unfortunately the vicar of the parish (a great personal friend of Sir John's) recognises them both (having married them), and then to make matters worse, a young man bursts in on them with a request for more petrol as he has run out of it, and recognises Lady Dorle, having, as British Consul at San Remo, married her to Sir John. It is all very complicated but there is worse to come. The young man confesses to Lady Dorle that at the time he married her to Sir John he was no longer British Consul, but that owing to some delay in the delivery of letters he had not received news of his dismissal until afterwards, therefore her marriage is invalid and she is no longer Sir John's legal wife, but the wife of her former husband, Mr. Reggie Irvine. Here we get a slight attack of brain fever, which, nevertheless, fortunately does not become too serious to allow of us seeing the end of the play where everything comes all right and both couples are left happy once more. Mr. Aubrey Smith as the much harassed Sir John Dorle, gives a most excellent performance as usual. It is always a joy to see him on the stage, and we wish him every success in his present venture. Mr. George Tully gives a very amusing character study of the impulsive Irishman and novelist, Reggie Irvine, but his wife, Miss Faith Celli, is hopelessly mis-cast. Her speech and gestures are most unnatural, and in direct contrast to Miss Yvonne Arnaud (Lady Dorle), whose acting is always spontaneous and unforced, and her humour delightful. Amongst the smaller parts one may mention Mr. Guy Newall, successful in a "silly ass" part, and Miss Honor Aubrey Smith does her best with the part of the housemaid, a rather thankless one, we must admit. The play is written by Mr. Frank Stayton, and produced by Mr. Martin Sabine, and we hope it will have a successful run. D.M.

MANDOLINE QUERY AND ANSWER.

Dear Sir,

Being a subscriber to KEYNOTES I have been reading your articles on the Mandoline with great interest, as the playing of this instrument has been for some considerable time now my only hobby, but I was very much struck with your remark in your article on page 151 where you say "unless this is so, you will never play tremolo," referring, of course, to playing from the wrist. Now, naturally, I feel reticent to dictate or pass a contrary opinion to a person of your standing with this instrument, but this remark I cannot understand. If there is one thing that I pride myself on, it is tremolo, and have been told frequently by first class players that my tremolo is extra good, and I have always played with a perfectly stiff wrist from the elbow. I also play with a very heavy plectrum to the ordinary one, made, of course, with real polished tortoise-shell with bevelled edge. I have practised until I can play an exceedingly fast tremolo, which is little, if any, louder than the soft part of the fingers would produce on the strings, and, of course, the heavy plectrum enables me to play fortissimo with ease. The plectra I use have practically no "give," or at least very little, so that I am never relying on the suppleness of the plectrum, but entirely on the grip of same and a stiff wrist. I should very much like to demonstrate this fact to you but, of course, that is impossible. Your other remarks I cordially agree with, but cannot possibly agree with this one. I am,

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN ELRICK.

JOHN ELRICK, ESQ., ABERDEEN.

That you can get a "Tremolo," playing with "A perfectly stiff wrist from the elbow," I do not doubt, but that you can get an "extra good tremolo," without being deprecatory, I confess I am sceptical, and would have to see it demonstrated to be convinced. With your right arm vibrating rapidly from the elbow, how do you maintain a firm steady grip of your instrument for fingering, particularly playing in positions? I have had this argument many times, but in those instances I have been able to demonstrate the difference practically, and in every case I have convinced my interlocutors with happy results. In your case, unfortunately, this is not possible.

I would suggest to you, however, hold your plectrum as explained in my notes (see May issue). Give this an extended trial, and note the difference. Watch a professional who has to play for hours at a time (Dance Orchestral Banjo players for instance, where the same principle applies). Note the easy grace and free wrist movement and entire absence of fatigue. Could they do this with a stiff wrist playing from the elbow? From experience I say, *No.*

This, I assure you, is not a "fad" or theory of my own, but is the teaching of the Italian School of Mandoline professors, backed by an experience evolved and dating back to the days of the Rennaissance and is advocated by, amongst others, the great Bellinghi (1882), and to-day by Mario de Pietro, who stands alone as a virtuoso of the Mandoline of the present generation.

PAS. TROISE.

Don't forget! You receive a new Solo for every yearly subscription obtained.

"Keynotes" Theatrical Gallery.

No. VIII.—**Miss Heather Thatcher.**

MISS HEATHER THATCHER and her "monocle" are very well known in London, and she is one of the most popular of our younger actresses.

She has appeared in many musical plays both on tour and in town, but latterly her name has been associated entirely with the Winter Garden Theatre, where she is at present playing most successfully an important part in the new Musical Comedy there called "Tell Me More."

Amongst her earlier successes are "The Boy," "Buzz Buzz," "Faust on Toast," "Sally," "The Cabaret Girl," and "The Beauty Prize."

She is possessed of a very vivid and charming personality, and has established herself as a firm favourite with the theatre-going public.

Motoring and golf are two of her favourite pastimes, and she devotes a good deal of her leisure hours to them. We hope to have the pleasure of seeing her in the "Winter Garden" productions for many years to come.

Stage Illusions.

By D.M.

THERE has recently been a certain amount of controversy as to whether celebrities of the stage should be seen so frequently at night-clubs and other places of amusement.

Mr. Allan Aynesworth has said a few words on the subject, and personally I am inclined to agree with him that, to a certain extent, it does destroy the illusions we hold about our favourite "stars."

To see Miss Gladys Cooper or Miss Dorothy Dickson taking ordinary food in an ordinary manner comes somewhat as a shock, for we feel that they ought to regale themselves with nectar and ambrosia and other food of the gods!

At the *Café de Paris* the other night June was sitting about three tables away from me, and looking as usual very pretty.

I suddenly realised two things about her: firstly, that she is remarkably short-sighted, and is obliged to use lorgnettes if she wants to see anything at all, and secondly, that she possesses a healthy and normal appetite! Now this is all wrong, believe me!

If I had seen her on the stage only, I should not have discovered either of these mundane things. There, she seems a creature of elusive charm, floating rather than moving about the stage, and as for her dancing, who could attempt to describe it in ordinary language? Not a mere mortal like myself, anyway.

But when this same beauteous vision is seen under totally different conditions, and subject to the same frailties that "flesh is heir to," all the illusions previously held are rudely dispelled.

That is our point of view, of course. Theirs has yet to be considered. Why, after working hard for hours on end to amuse others, should not they in turn get some fun out of life? Thus the whole difficult problem arises.

Personally, after considering both sides of the case, I must own that my sympathies are with the stage folk.

They surely hvae a right to demand amusement, and to seek it in their own way, seeing how hard they work.

Some misguided people go about the world thinking that the life of an actor or actress is an easy one, that they merely work for about three hours every evening, and rest all day. To those people I say: "Try it yourselves for six months, and see whether you hold the same opinion after that."

Not only do actors and actresses work hard during the evening, but often while playing in one show they are rehearsing all day for another, and somehow managing to wedge in special dancing lessons, and visits to the tailor or dressmaker.

Some of them may be playing in Cabaret shows as well, which means that on matinee days they work from 2.30 p.m. until 1 or 2 a.m., with hardly any intervals for rest or food. Pretty good going this, and it does not leave much time for relaxation.

Repertory players work even harder, producing as many as two or three shows a week, all of which have to be committed to memory and rehearsed daily. After considering these things I repeat my sympathy goes out to them, and I will gladly suffer occasional disillusionment so that they may enjoy their few remaining hours of freedom.

The Banjo.

PLECTRUM AND FINGER PLAYING—A COMPARISON.

By Claude E. Day.

MANY prospective pupils for the Banjo experience doubts concerning which style of playing to adopt, plectrum or finger work. For an artistic style the finger playing is certainly the most effective, as one is able to accomplish so many things that are impossible with the plectrum, and to bring out the expression on the instrument.

On the other hand many would-be players are attracted by the glamour of the dance band, and of course there is nothing to be compared with the plectrum Banjo for accentuating the rhythm which is the backbone of all modern dance music. No dance band is really complete without the Banjo, and there are, in consequence, a great many plectrum players who have not so far attempted picking. These players would be well advised to cultivate right hand fingering, and would never have occasion to regret doing so.

Good right hand fingering requires a particularly high standard of technique, and assiduous study is necessary to obtain the best results. This study will well repay the student by giving him a keen sense of personal satisfaction when on arriving at a state of proficiency from a mere banjo player in a band, confining himself to playing accompanying chords merely to emphasise rhythm, he has developed into a soloist capable of entertaining and interesting an audience with his own individual prowess.

Another point for finger playing. The Banjo is practically unique amongst all other instruments. It gives quite effective results when played alone without any accompaniment, and is sufficient unto itself. This can be said of very few other instruments, nearly all of which require another player to provide accompaniment and harmony for their melodies. This enables a banjoist to be completely independent of others for his practice, and should assist him to a deeper concentration of his studies.

The Banjo is regarded in a very different light to what it was some years ago. What could one desire better than to listen to Messrs. Cammeyer and Sheaff playing duets? Persons having the most discriminating taste in music could wish for nothing better, and really their latest gramophone records sound more like quaint and wonderful arrangements for a small symphonic orchestra than Banjo music as it is generally supposed to be. Then again, what more interesting occupation is there for a banjoist than to study Joe Morley's delightful compositions with their subtle and ingenious arrangements for left hand fingering and clever execution for the right hand? The days of jigs, breakdowns, and cakewalks for the banjo have given way to an era of really excellent music. Players owe more than they perhaps realise to composers like Morley and Cammeyer for raising the standard of the Banjo from a mere vamping level to a high class solo instrument.

Writers like Morley have an unlimited supply of excellent solos always ready to publish, but publication of music is, and always will be, a strictly commercial proposition. Therefore, if the demand is not created by the players themselves, those excellent works will go unpublished, and banjoists will lose the benefit of them. It is up to everybody to assist the publishers by supporting them so that they are able to provide fresh supplies of music for the Banjo. For this reason all players should endeavour to keep up-to-date with studies, and to interest themselves in the new solos as soon as they are published.

Finger players who also use the plectrum will find that it has a very bad effect on quick and decisive right hand playing, and constant exercises are necessary to counteract the cramping effect caused by gripping the plectrum.

It will be discovered on examining the movements of the right hand when playing that the principal action takes place at the middle joint of the first and second finger, and at the first joint of the thumb. These should be exercised as freely as possible in order to develop the muscles which control them, enabling the player to obtain a finer control of the strings, and to increase considerably the speed of his playing.

No banjoist should be content to play elementary music without an idea of advancement, but should always be ambitious to improve himself in order to maintain his interest in the instrument. The most difficult solos are worth studying if merely for educational reasons. They lead the player to a higher degree of self confidence, which after all is one of the principal things necessary to a musician. A number of players seem to have a dread of venturing into the higher positions of the Banjo, simply because they confine themselves to playing old fashioned music in which one was never expected to take the hand above the fifth fret for chord playing, the frets above the tenth position being a totally unexplored region.

Although my own personal experience of public playing has been more with the dance band than solo playing my preference has also been for the latter, and all my spare time is devoted to undoing the harm that plectrum playing causes to right hand fingering. My idea in this article is to convey to Keynotes readers the immense possibilities open to banjoists at the present time. They have good music to study, instruments are being manufactured on scientific lines to bring out every atom of tone to the best advantage, and the public interest has been aroused. All that is required is the enthusiasm of the players to maintain their support in a movement to still further popularise their favourite instrument.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

In next month's Keynotes, Mr. Day will contribute a further instalment of his interesting article.

A Banjo in Every Home!

By "Musica."

NOW the above title, I think, would make a fine motto for the KEYNOTES B.M. & G. Club. Of course, a Mandolinist would say "A Mandoline in every Home." Being a Banjo enthusiast *I* say "A Banjo in every Home." And why not? When one comes to think of it, it is a good deal more likely and reasonable to expect than a Piano in every home. A Piano is an expensive luxury which many people cannot afford, and in these days of house shortage a luxury which cannot be found room for.

If the claims of the Banjo (apologies to the Mandolinists and Guitarists) could be properly placed before the public it is certain that many people would go in for this (these) instrument(s). The cost of a good Banjo is considerably less than that of a mediocre Piano, and we all know the capabilities of the average pianist. Given the same amount of tuition and practice a much better result would be shewn by a student of the Banjo. A Banjo in every Home! Why not? Being an instrument of chords and arpeggios it is *full* of harmony, therefore it does not need an accompaniment. The Banjo as an accompaniment to the voice, I think cannot be beaten, except in some songs by the Guitar (cheers from Guitarists, I think, are indicated). It is surprising the number of people I meet who *used* to play the Banjo. Why don't they play now? Not because they have lost their liking for the instrument. Have you ever known anyone break free from the magnetic sway of this fascinating instrument? No! There are several reasons. Banjo's that were made a few years ago were heavy, clumsy, and sometimes minus frets. The music composed for it was of a simple character, or else a directly transposed "Classic" which it was practically impossible to play. The instruments being heavy, the tone was dull and "plunky." If some of these old friends handled instruments made on modern lines, and played music composed by modern composers, they would be amazed at the progress that has been made both in instrument construction and music composition.

Younger people, too, we come across who simply will persist in associating the Banjo with "the Saloon Bar door." And, by the way, this helps to prove the versatility of our instrument. We have a thousand and one obstacles to overcome in trying to make our instrument popular. The best way, and the only way, is to let them hear the instrument played as it *should* be, and *can* be, played.

The KEYNOTES Banjo Club I regard as another movement in the right direction. *More* and *better playing* should be the object. Good instruments in the hands of good players. Added to this, the comradeship and sympathy which *must* arise between people expressing their thoughts musically should carry the kindred instruments again *well* to the front.

In closing, can anyone beat the twang of the Banjo round the camp fire, at the picnic or on the river? Now is the time and weather. Don't leave your instrument in its case till winter is again upon you. Take it with you, out into the open. Heavy! perhaps so, but you will be amply repaid for your trouble. Just you try it!

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar.

By A. F. Cramer.

I THINK the Hawaiian Steel Guitar is the easiest stringed instrument to learn, provided that you know how to set about it; and I would advise anyone who desires to take it up, first of all to have a few lessons from a competent teacher; if possible, one who has himself studied under a native Hawiian, and who is a proficient performer on the instrument, as I consider it impossible for anyone to teach unless he is able to demonstrate to his pupil the various exercises and pieces to be learned.

It is difficult for the ordinary student to teach himself from an instruction book, however explicit it may be, and even if he has been a player of the "True Guitar," as there are so many peculiarities in the Hawiian method which are almost impossible to write down in a Tutor. I will, however, try to explain how to hold the steel, which is one of the first and most important things to understand. It should be held between the thumb and second finger of the left hand, the first finger laying along the top. Having your Guitar in place for playing, place the steel across the strings, say, at the 5th fret, spread out or extend the 3rd and 4th fingers, and allow them to rest lightly on the strings, and with a slight pressure of the steel you are now ready to play barre chords, at any fret desired. When the steel is tipped up to play single notes, the left hand retains the steel in exactly the same position as when playing barre chords, but it is most essential to make sure that the 2nd and 3rd fingers are touching the string behind the steel, otherwise an unpleasant jarring sound may occur, and this *must* be avoided, the little or 4th finger is free. When playing single notes on any string except the first, the second finger *only* is required to touch the string behind the steel. These rules must be strictly adhered to, otherwise the student will never produce the correct TONE.

I will deal with the RIGHT HAND in my next article.

CONCERT REPORT.

I HAVE before me the photo of a group of players, ages ranging from ten years upwards, each holding an instrument, from a Ukulele to a large Mando Cello, including the Mandoline, Banjo, Steel Guitar and Saxophone. The name across the bottom of the photo is "De Vekey's Juvenile Serenaders." By all accounts these Serenaders carry all before them. On 24th June they played at the "Priory Fete," held at Christchurch. The report says: "The varied items rendered by them gave great pleasure and satisfaction." The Serenaders are pupils of Mr. A. de Vekey, of Bournemouth. Their programme includes Solos, Duets and Ensembles. The little people are in great demand for Fetes, Garden Parties, Carnivals, and similar functions. The press notices and enthusiastic receptions by large audiences amply testify that the fretted instruments are tremendously popular with the general public. These little folk are directed on the platform by Mrs. A. de Vekey, who accompanies them on the Guitar and Piano. Their items include songs, accompanied by themselves, as well as orchestral numbers. Mr. and Mrs. A. de Vekey are to be congratulated on the wide range of instruments represented, as well as on the performance of The Serenaders.

The Nomad Banjo Bandelette.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL OUTING.

ALTHOUGH the primary object of Banjo Clubs and Orchestras is the serious study of the belowed instrument, no Club can be successfully run without its lighter side. Occasional well organised dances or socials are ideal during the winter months, and garden parties or country picnics are a more attractive feature for the summer. Mr. H. J. Emmerson, the capable leader and manager of the "Nomad Banjo Bandelette" is well aware of this fact, and is to be congratulated on the excellent outing he arranged for Sunday, 5th July, when his troupe, augmented by members of the "Aston Banjo Club," spent a delightful day at Forest Green, a charming spot at the foot of the south slopes of Leith Hill, Surrey.

Leaving Wimbledon by motor-coach, we soon discovered that Mr. Emmerson had mapped out a most attractive itinerary through Esher, Cobham, Ripley, Guildford, Newlands Corner, etc., thence through by-roads and narrow lanes, and, by the way, one cannot refrain from hoping that they are not often desecrated by such cumbersome, though otherwise convenient, vehicles.

We arrived soon after 12 o'clock to find that at the "Parrot" Inn a welcome lunch had been prepared by Mr. A. J. Osmond. The usual toasts ensued and Mr. Harry Marsh, conductor of the "Aston Banjo Orchestra" complimented Mr. Emmerson on the excellence of his arrangements, proposing a toast to the success of the "Nomads." Mr. Emmerson, in his response, suggested that any credit he derived was more in the nature of reflected glory, since he owed his enthusiasm for the Banjo mainly to Mr. Geo. Ovenden, Mr. Marsh, and the "A.B.C."

The afternoon was spent by the more strenuous in a nine mile ramble, which included a climb to the summit of Leith Hill Tower with its reward of magnificent views. The less active found the nearer environs sufficiently interesting.

After tea, selections were played by the "Nomads," vocal quartettes by Messrs. Richardson, Charman, Edwards and Phillips, and Mr. Len .Parry contributed humourous items. As a final we had Banjo solos—"Pompadour" and "Donkey Laugh" (Morley) by Mr. Geo. J. Ovenden, whose touch, fingering and style are as near to "Joe's" as it is possible to get, and the applause "Our George" received was every bit deserved. Although not on the programme officially, one must not omit Mr. Geo. Pinnock ("Sir William") whose "turn" lasted the whole day, he being the wit, wag, or jester of super excellence without which no party is complete. Besides which, he is a juggler of no mean capacity, his dexterity with the tankard being little short of marvellous.

The return route by way of Dorking, Leatherhead and Epsom was equally enjoyable, and all who took part in the outing felt that it had been an unqualified success.

Dance Notes.

THE "Jazz Master," Mr. Vincent Lopez and his famous band, have been succeeded by the "Jazz Mistress," Miss Winifred Arthur, who, together with her all-British band made her first appearance at the London Hippodrome on 6th July. We wish her every success in her new venture.

In spite of the recent "heat-wave" dancing still continues to be as popular as ever. One has only to wade through the "Society Column" of our daily newspapers to see just how energetic our young people are—and not only the young either, but with them their parents, and even in some cases their grand-parents too—.Truly we live in a wonderful age, and apparently there is no age-limit with regard to the dancing craze. It was my privilege to meet the other day a certain well-known society hostess, who is comfortably in the seventies, but who, nevertheless, is possessed of the most amazing vitality. She is one of the best read women in town, witty and amusing to talk to, loves racing and dancing, and will often continue the latter pastime well into the early hours of the morning, long after some of the younger spirits have given it up and retired "tired" (not hurt)! The truth of the matter is dancing is a most healthy recreation, apart from its more romantic side. It keeps one fit and "alive," reduces one's liver to an abject state of subjection, and surely gives an added zeal to life. It is worth far more than all the daily doses of much advertised "Kruschen," though perhaps costing a trifle more than "a farthing a day," and is a certain cure for all dyspeptic troubles arising chiefly from over-feeding!

There is nothing very new to record in the way of dancing itself, being between the seasons, but probably by the autumn there will be something fresh in the way of "steps." We hope so anyway, both for the sake of the "instructors" and the dancing public itself, for one must admit the present ones are verging perilously near the monotonous, and each couple look more or less alike in a ball-room, apart from their expressions, which range from hectic enjoyment (here I refer to elderly couples, who are probably suffering from the effects of an over-dose of "monkey gland"), to either strained absorption or complete and utter boredom. (This latter most prevalent amongst flappers and their respective partners!)

I hear very good reports of the "Kit Kat" Club, which is one of the many new night Clubs in London. It has an excellent band I believe, and the inside decorations and lighting effects are quite out of the ordinary. It is underneath the Capitol Cinema, in the Haymarket, but nevertheless the rooms are both spacious and airy. In spite of recent controversies on the subject, the Night Club still seems to flourish apace, and as far as one can see, is likely to do so.

D.M.

KEYNOTES BANJO CLUB. See page 169!

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SEE PAGE - 169.